

R 301124Z JUN 85
FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5363
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ALEXANDRIA 00535

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM ALEXANDRIA: RAMADAN I

11. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.)

12. SUMMARY: THIS IS THE FIRST MESSAGE IN A TWO-PART SERIES WHICH DISCUSSES THE JUST-COMPLETED MONTH OF RAMADAN, AND THE ENSUING FEAST PERIOD, IN THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA. ALTHOUGH THE MONTH PASSED WITH THE TRADITIONAL GAIETY, THIS YEAR THE MUSLIM HOLY MONTH OF DAYTIME FASTING WAS CELEBRATED AGAINST A BACKDROP OF APPARENT RISING FUNDAMENTALISM, CHALLENGES TO THE PUBLIC ORDER, AND THE CONTINUING SAGA OF THE "TRIAL BY PRESS" OF ALEXANDRIA'S GOVERNOR. END SUMMARY.

13. RAMADAN, WHICH LASTED FROM MAY 20 TO JUNE 17 IN EGYPT, WAS CELEBRATED IN TRADITIONAL FASHION IN ALEXANDRIA. BUT THIS YEAR, UNLIKE LAST, IT WAS AGAINST A BACKDROP OF GROWING FUNDAMENTALISM AND SECURITY CONCERNS; WORSENING QUALITY OF LIFE, AND A DETERIORATING URBAN ENVIRONMENT; AND MORE THAN A WHIFF OF POLITICAL SCANDAL, DUE TO THE ONGOING INVESTIGATION OF GOVERNOR MA'1"'S STEWARDSHIP OF THE CITY (FOR BACKGROUND ON LATTER, SEE ALEXANDRIA 435). FOR ALL THE GAIETIZ OF THE SEASON, ONE SENSED THAT SOME OF IT WAS PROBABLY FORCED: MANY OF THE ALEXANDRIANS WE KNOW ARE WORRIED, BOTH ABOUT THEIR COUNTRY AND THEIR CITY. RAMADAN--WHEN THE ADVANCE GUARD ARRIVES OF THE 1.5 MILLION CAIRENES WHO EVENTUALLY SPEND THE SUMMER IN ALEXANDRIA--TURNED OUT TO BE A GOOD TIME TO REFLECT ON LIFE IN THIS CITY, AND TO COLLECT COMMENTS FROM OUR CONTACTS ABOUT ISSUES WHICH CONCERN THEM.

-
14. IFTARS: "IFTAR" (OR, BREAKFAST), THE MEAL WHICH BREAKS THE FAST AT SUNSET, IS A TIME OF RESPLENDENT FEASTS IN ALEXANDRIA. THE REPORTING OFFICER DID NOT ATTEND ANY AT WHICH THERE WAS LESS THAN FIVE TIMES THE AMOUNT OF FOOD NECESSARY FOR THE NUMBER OF GUESTS PRESENT. SOME OF THE FOODS ARE TRADITIONAL--FOR EXAMPLE, EGYPTIANS OF ALL CLASSES ACTUALLY BREAK THE FAST WITH "FUL" (RED BEANS)--INCLUDING IMPORTED ITEMS, SUCH AS THE APRICOT PASTE (FROM SYRIA)WHICH IS USED TO MAKE THE RAMADAN-ONLY DRINK, AMAR-EL-DINE. THE PASTRY "KUNAFI" IS MADE ON TURNING GRILLS, PLACED OUTSIDE ON SIDEWALKS DURING RAMADAN, AND IS OFFERED AT EVERY IFTAR. WHILE THE MEATS MAY VARY, SHRIMP IS NOT A TRADITIONAL RAMADAN FOOD AND PRICES IN ALEXANDRIA, KNOWN THROUGHOUT EGYPT FOR THIS DELICACY, ACTUALLY PLUMMET DURING THIS TIME. (ONE HOTEL MANAGER OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE STOCKS UP, AND FREEZES, SHRIMP FOR THE ENTIRE SUMMER DURING RAMADAN.) WHILE IFTARS IN ALEXANDRIA ARE MORE SOCIAL, THAN RELIGIOUS, OCCASIONS, THIS YEAR WE ATTENDED OUR FIRST HOME IFTAR WHICH HAD A SHAYKH PRESENT TO LEAD THE TWO EVENING PRAYERS ON PRAYER RUGS ESPECIALLY LAID OUT ON THE LAWN OF THE HOST'S VILLA FOR THE OCCASION. COMMENT: IT IS PROBABLY WORTH NOTING, IF ONLY IN PASSING, THAT NOT ALL OF THE VEILED WOMEN PRESENT, EITHER THIS YEAR, OR LAST YEAR AT SIMILAR FUNCTION, JOINED IN THE PRAYERS. IN ADDITION TO EXTREMELY HEAVY RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING DURING RAMADAN, EGYPTIAN TELEVISION ALSO RUNS SPECIAL VIEWER PARTICIPATION GAME SHOWS AND SERIALS IN THE EVENINGS. LARGE COLOR TELEVISIONS ARE EVEN BROUGHT OUT OF DOORS FOR GARDEN IFTARS. BOTH YEARS, THE SERIAL WON OUT OVER THE LAST EVENING PRAYER FOR AT LEAST A FEW OF THE VEILED FEMALES. END COMMENT.

15. IFTAR CONVERSATIONS:

-- (A) VEILS: ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO SCIENTIFIC DATA, THERE WAS VISIBLY A SHARP INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF VEILED FEMALES IN ALEXANDRIA DURING THIS RAMADAN. FEMALE, MUSLIM

STAFF MEMBERS OF THE CONGEN (NONE OF WHOM IS VEILED) HAVE EVEN COME TO US TO EXPRESS CONCERN. THIS ISSUE--PERHAPS CODE TO DISCUSS DEEPER WORRIES ABOUT THE RISE OF FUNDAMENTALISM-- WAS DISCUSSED REPEATEDLY BY OUR CONTACTS DURING RAMADAN. (COMMENT: "VEILS", AS USED BY OUR CONTACTS, AND IN THIS MESSAGE, DESCRIBES THE CURRENT EGYPTIAN FASHION OF COVERED HEAD, HAIR AND THROAT--BUT WITH FACE STILL VISIBLE, UNLIKE IN THE GULF--ACCOMPANIED BY LONG SLEEVE BLOUSES AND FLOOR LENGTH SKIRTS. END COMMENT.) WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE (MODERATE) CHIEF JUSTICE OF EGYPT ADDRESSED THE BLUE-RIBBON EASTERN ALEXANDRIA ROTARY CLUB DURING ONE RAMADAN IFTAR. THE SUBJECT OF VEILS APPARENTLY CAME UP DURING THE DISCUSSION, AND HE ASSERTED THAT THE KORAN DOES NOT CALL FOR VEILING. HE WAS HEATEDLY DENOUNCED FROM THE FLOOR TO THE DEGREE THAT OTHER MEMBERS OF THIS ROTARY (COMPRISED MOSTLY OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP OF ALEXANDRIA) FELT OBLIGED TO STAND UP AND DEMAND APOLOGIES FROM THEIR FELLOW ROTARIANS. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESSMEN IN EGYPT, MOHAMED RAGAB, IS A MEMBER OF THIS ROTARY. HIS WIFE ADOPTED THE VEIL DURING RAMADAN--AND THAT HAS PROVOKED MUCH COMMENTARY AMONG THE CITY'S ELITE (WHOSE WIVES ARE GENERALLY UNVEILED). COMMENT: IN A COUNTRY WHERE FELLAHIN WOMEN TRADITIONALLY COVER THEIR HAIR WITH A SCARF, AND WHERE URBAN WIDOWS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE POOR, OFTEN ADOPT HEAD COVERING, "VEILS" ARE NOT UNKNOWN. WE ARE TOLD, HOWEVER, THAT THEY ARE NOT TRADITIONAL AMONG EDUCATED, URBAN FEMALES. SOME OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN THAT SO MANY YOUNG WOMEN ARE ADOPTING VEILS. THIS, IN FACT, IS WHERE THE SHARP RISE IN HEAD COVERINGS HAS OCCURRED. BASED ON OUR TRAVELS IN THE DELTA, IT REMAINS AN URBAN PHENOMENON. END COMMENT.

-- (B) GOVERNOR MA'AZ'S PROBLEMS: THE PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE (SEE ALEXANDRIA 435) FINISHED ITS WORK IN ALEXANDRIA DURING RAMADAN. THE REPORT IS SLATED TO BE PUBLISHED IN EARLY JULY, BUT ALREADY THE PRESS IS REPORTING THAT THE COMMITTEE IS "SPLIT"--NOT ON HIS GUILT, BUT ON WHETHER TO REFER HIS CASE TO THE REGULAR COURTS OR THE SOCIALIST PROSECUTOR. MEANWHILE, THE NDP MEMBER OF THE PEOPLES ASSEMBLY WHO STARTED THE AFFAIR, GEBRIL MOHAMED, IS SEEN CARRYING SHEAVES OF PAPERS AROUND TOWN (PRESS REPORTS NOTE THAT HE HAS AN ADDITIONAL 39 CHARGES TO OFFER TO THE COMMITTEE) CLAIMING THIS CASE WILL BE "THE EGYPTIAN WATERGATE." EARLY DURING THE INVESTIGATION, THE ACCUSER SAID THAT HIS LIFE WAS IN DANGER (THE WINDSHIELD WAS MYSTERIOUSLY BROKEN ON HIS CAR, FOLLOWING WHICH HE HAS TAKEN TO PARKING IT OVERNIGHT ON THE GROUNDS OF THE NDP PARTY HEADQUARTERS)--CERTAINLY AN EXAGGERATION, BUT CALCULATED TO GARNER EVEN MORE PUBLICITY FOR HIS CAUSE. THERE IS CONTINUED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF THE INVESTIGATION IN THE "WAFD" AND MOST OTHER NATIONAL PRINT MEDIA. DURING RAMADAN, THE GOVERNOR GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO THE NEWS MAGAZINE "OCTOBER" CONCERNING HIS PERSONAL REAL ESTATE DEALS IN THE NEARBY BEACH RESORT OF AGAMI: HE LIED, AND THE "WAFD" SUBSEQUENTLY PUBLISHED PHOTOCOPIES OF THE SALE AND TAX RECORDS. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT MUBARAK HAS NOT SPOKEN OUT PUBLICLY ON THIS ISSUE, GOVERNOR MA'AZ WAS NOTABLY ABSENT FROM THE LIST OF GOVERNORS WHO RECEIVED AWARDS FROM THE PRESIDENT AT THE JUST-CONCLUDED CONFERENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CAIRO. WE HAVE RECENTLY LEARNED THAT WHEN THE PRESIDENT CAME TO ALEXANDRIA MAY 13 TO INAUGURATE VARIOUS PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE USAID TELEPHONE PROJECT, HE TOLD THE GOVERNOR ON ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT THAT "IF WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT YOU IN THE PRESS IS TRUE, THE CASE WILL GO TO THE COURTS." COMMENT: WE CONTINUE TO BE INTRIGUED BY HOW THE PRESIDENT HANDLES THE CASES OF SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PUBLICLY ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION. IN BOTH THE MOUSTAPHA EL SAID CASE, AND NOW APPARENTLY WITH GOVERNOR MA'AZ, HE PERMITS A "TRIAL BY PRESS" AND THEN LETS THE COURTS TAKE OVER. FOR LESSER LIGHTS (EG. THE RECENT NUMEROUS FIRINGS AND FORCED RETIREMENTS IN THE CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION (SEE FORTHCOMING SEPTTEL), THE RECKONING DAY ARRIVES MORE SWIFTLY. WE WONDER IF THIS OTHERWISE ADMIRABLE LOYALTY TO HIS SENIOR OFFICIALS--FOR EXAMPLE, NOT SUSPENDING THEM DURING THE PRESS ATTACKS--MIGHT BE MISPLACED? END COMMENT. AS ALEXANDRIANS ARE WELL-KNOWN

FOR BEING (IF OUR READERS WILL PERMIT) ALEXANDRIA-CENTRIC, THIS ISSUE, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, DOMINATED RAMADAN CONVERSATIONS HERE. THE GOVERNOR HAS VERY FEW DEFENDERS AMONG THE ALEXANDRIA ELITE, WHOSE PRIME INTEREST NOW, APPEARS TO BE SPECULATING ON HOW THE GOVERNOR'S RIGHT HAND MAN (AND WIDELY VIEWED AS CORRUPT, UNLIKE THE GOVERNOR), GOVERNORATE SECRETARY-GENERAL SHAKER ABDEL SALAAM, HAS MANAGED TO KEEP HIS NAME OUT OF THIS INVESTIGATION.

-- (C) NOT DISCUSSED: WE WERE STRUCK BY THE LACK OF CONVERSATION ON THE FATE OF THE PERSONAL STATUS LAW, AS IT HAS APPARENTLY GALVANIZED CAIRO (SEE CAIRO 16094, PLUS NEWS REPORTS ON THE SAME SUBJECT). IF THE SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED, WE HAD TO RAISE IT. WE DID--ON TWO OCCASIONS DURING RAMADAN. ONE EGYPTIAN WOMAN (AND FORMER WIFE OF A SYRIAN VICE FOREIGN MINISTER) SAID THAT SHE HAD VISITED THE NDP ALEX HEADQUARTERS TO TRY TO GET "SOMETHING" STARTED AMONG THE WOMEN IN ALEXANDRIA, TO FORCE THE GOE TO DEVELOP LEGISLATION TO REPLACE THE "JIHAN SADAT LAW" STRUCK DOWN BY THE COURTS MAY 4. SHE REPORTED THAT HER REMARKS WERE RECEIVED WITH HOSTILITY BY THE THREE FEMALE PARTY WORKERS WITH WHOM SHE SPOKE, WHO ASSERTED THAT THE JIHAN SADAT LAW WAS "CONTRARY" TO ISLAM. OUR FRIEND, WHO RELATED THIS AT A TABLE WITH THREE WELL-EDUCATED FEMALE FAMILY MEMBERS PRESENT, SUMMARIZED HER VIEWS THUS: "SYRIAN WOMEN WOULD NEVER PUT UP WITH THIS. EGYPTIAN WOMEN ARE UNSOPHISTICATED." (THE OTHERS PRESENT LET THE REMARK STAND.)

-- ONE MEMBER OF THE SAME FAMILY DECIDED TO ASK FOR A DIVORCE IN MAY, WHEREUPON HER HUSBAND PROMPTLY ASKED HER TO LEAVE THE CAIRO APARTMENT WHICH HAD BEEN PURCHASED FOR THE YOUNG COUPLE BY THE GIRL'S FAMILY. THESE KINDS OF STORIES PROMPTED NDP ALEX PARTY CHIEF, MOHAMED ABDELLAH, IN A LATER CONVERSATION, TO TERM THE GOE'S CURRENT EFFORTS TO PASS A PERSONAL STATUS LAW (SEE CAIRO 16752) THE "FLAT ACT." THAT, HE ASSERTED, IS THE REAL ISSUE. EGYPTIAN WOMEN ARE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT SECOND MARRIAGES OF THEIR HUSBANDS (RARE AMONG EDUCATED--AND POLITICIZED--EGYPTIANS, IN ANY EVENT), THAN IN SUDDENLY FINDING THEMSELVES HOMELESS IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE HOUSING CRISIS IS ACUTE, AND GROWING WORSE. COMMENT: EVEN THE EXPECTED LARGE RETURN OF EGYPTIANS FROM THE GULF WILL AGGRAVATE THE HOUSING PROBLEM IN ALEXANDRIA: MANY WOMEN, INCLUDING SOME ON THE CONSULATE STAFF, ARE RESIDING, WITH THEIR CHILDREN, IN THEIR PARENTS' HOME DURING THEIR HUSBANDS' LENGTHY ABSENCES IN THE GULF. THESE PROFESSIONAL COUPLES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO AVOID FACING THE HOUSING CRUNCH--THUS FAR. END COMMENT.

16. FASTING: WE KNOW SEVERAL PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN IN ALEXANDRIA WHO HAVE STARTED FASTING ONLY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. EVERYONE WE KNOW, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WHO NORMALLY IMBIBES ALCOHOL, GIVES IT UP FOR THE MONTH, AS WELL AS CIGARETTES DURING THE FASTING HOURS (THE LATTER IS PROBABLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE HEAVY SMOKING EGYPTIANS). THE GOE DECREE REGARDING THE SALE OF ALCOHOL DURING RAMADAN--IN GENERAL, IT IS ONLY SOLD IN "TOURISTIC" HOTELS OR RESTAURANTS, AND THEN ONLY TO FOREIGNERS--WAS SEVERELY ENFORCED IN ALEXANDRIA THIS YEAR. THE GREEK CONSUL GENERAL INVITED A VISITING DELEGATION FROM GREECE TO DINE AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT, OWNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALEXANDRIA GREEK COMMUNITY. THE RESTAURANT HAS A RAMADAN ALCOHOL PERMIT. DURING THE MEAL, A GENERAL INTELLIGENCE(MUKHABARAT) OFFICER CAME INTO THE RESTAURANT, OBSERVED THE WINE BEING SERVED TO THE GREEKS, AND ORDERED THE GREEK OWNER TO APPEAR AT MUKHABARAT HEADQUARTERS THE NEXT DAY. DURING THEIR MEETING, THE RESTAURANT OWNER WAS TOLD THAT, EVEN WITH A PERMIT, IF HE SERVED ALCOHOL DURING RAMADAN, THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES WOULD FIND "OTHER" WAYS TO PUT "PRESSURE" ON HIM. THE RAMADA, CURRENTLY ALEXANDRIA'S BEST HOTEL, VOLUNTARILY DID NOT SERVE ALCOHOL DURING RAMADAN, BUT HAD A SMALL BAR DISCREETLY SET UP IN AN UPSTAIRS SUITE FOR FOREIGNERS. THE MANAGER TOLD US THAT, IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE, HE FELT HIS DECISION WAS "GOOD FOR BUSINESS."

17. QUALITY OF LIFE--AND CIVIL DISTURBANCES: THE CITY'S

GROWING PROBLEMS WITH PROVIDING SERVICES FOR ITS 3 MILLION INHABITANTS BECOME AGGRAVATED DURING RAMADAN, DUE BOTH TO THE INFLUX OF VISITORS DURING THE FEAST FITLOWING RAMADAN, AND TO THE DEPLORABLE WORK HABITS OF FASTING CITY EMPLOYEES. ELECTRICAL AND WATER OUTAGES WERE FREQUENT DURING RAMADAN, AND GARBAGE PICK-UP, A CONTINUING, MAJOR PROBLEM HERE, ALMOST STOPPED TOWARD THE END OF MONTH (AND THROUGHOUT THE SIX-DAY FEAST AT THE END OF RAMADAN). THAT, COMBINED WITH HOT WEATHER AND BAD TEMPER PRODUCE BY THE FASTING, PROBABLY LED TO THE NUMEROUS CIVIL DISTURBANCES, LARGE AND SMALL, THE CITY WITNESSED DURING THE MONTH. AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS ARE FREQUENT, AS ARE STREET FIGHTS OVER THE SLIGHTEST SCRAPE: ONE CONGEN OFFICER REPORTED SEEING TWO STREET BRAWLS WITHIN ONE BLOCK. THERE WERE ALSO SEVERAL MAJOR INCIDENTS BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH, ATTRIBUTABLE TO "RAMADAN CONDITIONS" BY MOST ACCOUNTS:

(A) COPTIC-MUSLIM BRAWL: DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JUNE, THERE WAS A MAJOR FIGHT BETWEEN COPTS AND MUSLIMS AT A WHOLESALE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN THE NOUZA AREA OF ALEXANDRIA. WE HAVE HAD TWO VERSIONS FROM POLICE SOURCES AS TO HOW IT STARTED: ONE ALLEGES THAT A COPTIC MERCHANT OR CUSTOMER WAS MAKING A "SHOW" OF EATING AND SMOKING IN FRONT OF FASTING MUSLIMS. ANOTHER VERSION SAYS THAT THERE WAS A SIMPLE DISPUTE, BUT WHEN THE TWO CONTENDERS REALIZED THAT ONE WAS COPTIC AND THE OTHER MUSLIM, A MELEE BEGAN, WITH BYSTANDERS JOINING IN. OUR STATE SECURITY SOURCES CONFIRM THAT THERE WERE 15 ARRESTS AND 4 HOSPITALIZED; TWO CARS WERE BURNED AND ONE HOUSE OR SHOP DESTROYED. COMMENT: AS COPTIC CONTACTS HAVE NOT APPROACHED US ON THIS INCIDENT, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS NOT RELIGIOUSLY-INSPIRED AND SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS "SECTARIAN STRIFE"--BUT MERELY AN EXPLOSION OF TEMPER AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS. END COMMENT.

-

(B) MURDER IN LABAN: THERE IS A TRADITION IN ALEXANDRIA OF FOOTBALL GAMES IN THE STREETS DURING RAMADAN, EVEN MAJOR THOROUGHFARES (MAKING TRAFFIC EVEN MORE OF A BLOOD SPORT), IN THE LAST HOUR BEFORE THE "MEDFAA"--THE CANNON WHICH IS FIRED TO SIGNAL THE END OF THE FASTING PERIOD. IN THE WORKING CLASS DISTRICT OF LABAN, MEMBER OF THE GOE'S ELITE CENTRAL SECURITY FORCES, UNABLE TO GET A GAME STOPPED IN FRONT OF HIS ABODE, TOOK HIS GUN AND SHOT ONE OF THE PLAYERS. WHEN THE YOUNG MAN DIDN'T DIE IMMEDIATELY, HE SHOT HIM A SECOND TIME, WITH THE HORRIFIED FATHER STANDING BY, ACCORDING TO OUR POLICE SOURCES. THE CSF MEMBER IS NOW IN PRISON, BUT TEMPER ARE RAW IN LABAN.

(C) KNIFE FIGHT IN MANCHIA: OUR INFORMATION IS SKETCHIER ON THIS INCPQNT, BUT IT APPEARS THAT ZEALOUS CUSTOMS POLICE, IN A VERY INFREQUENT APPLICATION OF LAW 119 (1978)--WHICH ATTEMPTS TO REGULATE PROFITS ON IMPORTED ITEMS AMONG THE IMPORTER, WHOLESALE AND RETAILER--VISITED SHOPOWNERS TO LOOK AT THEIR BOOKS. THE MANCHIA SHOPS WERE FULL OF IMPORTED ITEMS AS RAMADAN, WHEN SALES APPROACH THOSE AT CHRISTMASTIME IN THE U.S., IS THE TIME WHEN RETAILERS MAKE A CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF THEIR YEARLY PROFITS. THE CUSTOMS POLICE DEPARTED, BUT WHEN THEY RETURNED THE SHOPOWNERS WERE WAITING FOR THEM WITH KNIVES. ALTHOUGH NO ONE WAS KILLED, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WERE QUITE A FEW INJURED DURING THE ENSUING KNIFE FIGHT.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THESE THREE INCIDENTS SHOULD PROPERLY BE LABELLED "CIVIL DISTURBANCES," ALEXANDRIA'S SECURITY FORCES WERE ON A STATE OF ALERT (ALL LEAVES CANCELLED) THROUGHOUT THE FEAST WHICH FOLLOWS RAMADAN. THE CITY EXPECTED VIOLENCE, OR AT LEAST PROHIBITED MARCHES, BY MUSLIM FUNDAMENTALISTS DURING THE SIX-DAY BAIRAM HOLIDAY, PARTICULARLY THE FIRST MORNING. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE LEARNED OF NO VIOLENCE, THERE WERE, INDEED, FUNDAMENTALIST ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING SOME IN CONTRAVENTION OF GOE DECREES) AND THOSE WILL BE ADDED IN THE SECOND MESSAGE IN THIS SERIES. END COMMENT.

COOK